AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) An image processing method as defined in Claim ~~1~~22, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim ~~3~~26, further comprising reference image generation means for generating the reference images based on a predetermined image.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable recoding medium as defined in Claim ~~5~~30, further comprising the procedure of generating the plurality of reference images in advance based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing method as defined in Claim ~~7~~24, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

9. (Currently Amended) An image processing method as defined in Claim ~~7~~24, wherein the subject is a face.

10.-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim ~~12~~28, further comprising:

a reference image generator for generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

14. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus as defined in Claim ~~12~~28, wherein the subject is a face.

15.-17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim ~~17~~32, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable recording medium as defined in Claim ~~17~~32, wherein the subject is a face.

20.-22. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 10~~An image processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in an image displayed; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 10~~An image processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in an image displayed; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 11~~An image processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

25. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 11~~An image processing method comprising the steps of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

26. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 15~~An image processing apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

display means for displaying an image and the reference images;

selection means for selecting a target image having a desired color-tone from the reference images;

area specification means for specifying an area in the image displayed on the display means; and

conversion means for changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 15~~An image processing apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

display means for displaying an image and the reference images;

selection means for selecting a target image having a desired color-tone from the reference images;

area specification means for specifying an area in the image displayed on the display means; and

conversion means for changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

28. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 16~~An image processing apparatus comprising:

a target selection input receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

an area selection input receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

a color-tone converter changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the selected target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 16~~An image processing apparatus comprising:

a target selection input receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

an area selection input receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

a color-tone converter changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the selected target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 20~~A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in an image displayed; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

31. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 20~~A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures of:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including the same type of image, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in an image displayed; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

32. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 21~~A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the target image is represented by the function g(d'), where d' represents a color density value for the target image, and the desired area is changed in accordance with the equation:

$$d'=g^{-1}(f(d)),$$

where d represents a color density value for the desired area, and f(d) is a function representing the cumulative histogram for the desired area.

33. (Currently Amended) ~~An image processing method as defined in claim 21~~A computer-readable recording medium storing a program to cause a computer to execute the procedures:

receiving selection of a target image having a desired color-tone from a plurality of reference images, each including an image of the same subject, each having a different color-tone;

receiving specification of an area in a displayed image including an image of the same kind of subject as the subject in the target image; and

changing a color-tone of a desired area including the specified area to the color-tone of the target image,

wherein the color-tone of the desired area is changed so that a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the target image and a cumulative histogram of the color-tone of the desired area become the same,

wherein the cumulative histogram for the desired area has a horizontal axis with increasing color density values and a vertical axis with increasing percentage values, such that a y-dimension value for a point on a curve representing the cumulative histogram corresponds to the percentage of pixels in the desired area having the x-dimension value for the point or a lesser x-dimension value.

34. (New) An image processing method as defined in claim 23, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

35. (New) An image processing method as defined in claim 25, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

36. (New) An image processing method as defined in claim 25, wherein the subject is a face.

37. (New) An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 27, further comprising reference image generation means for generating the reference images based on a predetermined image.

38. (New) An image processing apparatus as defined in claim 29, further comprising:

a reference image generator for generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

39. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the subject is a face.

40. (New) A computer-readable recording medium as defined in claim 31, further comprising the procedure of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

41. (New) A computer-readable recording medium as defined in claim 33, further comprising the step of generating the plurality of reference images in advance, based on a predetermined image before receiving the selection of the target image.

42. (New) A computer-readable recording medium as defined in claim 33, wherein the subject is a face.